

Honors College Capstone Project Frequently Asked Questions

1. *What is the purpose of the Capstone requirement?*

The Honors College Capstone project is intended to provide a challenging experience for students, one that builds on their Honors College training in the “art” of research and independent scholarship and allows the production of an original scholarly contribution to a discipline. It involves in-depth examination of a research problem, theoretical issue, new creative work, or innovative area of application (i.e., design or technological innovation) supervised by a faculty member chosen by the student in consultation with his or her Honors College Fellow. The Capstone is commensurate with the expectations of traditional departmental honors theses, senior design projects in many disciplines, and other rigorous senior research projects.

2. *What types of projects are considered suitable Capstones?*

Depending on your discipline, the project may be prepared in any appropriate form (such as a written report, performance, software, artwork, applied design project), although there still needs to be a corresponding written discussion or analysis of the project. Although the form may vary, you will need to present your work not only in written format, but you should also present it in a public academic forum. These are the two major components of the project.

3. *I am working on an advanced undergraduate research project for departmental distinction; can I use that for the Honors Capstone?*

Yes, the Honors College encourages students to complete a Capstone project that will simultaneously fulfill departmental or college requirements/opportunities for advanced undergraduate research and professional presentation, subject to approval by the student’s Honors College Faculty Fellow.

4. *I understand the written requirement. Why should I present the project in public?*

Presentation of the results of the student’s work in some form of public academic forum allows you to showcase your accomplishments. It is also a great opportunity for you to share ideas with your colleagues. It will be a proud moment for you, your project supervisor, your Fellow, your family and friends, and of course, the Honors College.

5. *What are some possible public forums where I can present my Capstone?*

The public presentation may take place (1) in a forum/symposium sponsored by the department or college (e.g., an “undergraduate research day” scheduled at a department or college level); (2) at a large university-wide event (e.g., the annual Student Research Forum held at UIC in Spring semester); (3) at the Honors College forum; or (4) at an academic symposium outside the university (e.g., a national or regional scholarly conference for a particular discipline). As for the form of presentation, it may be a lecture or oral presentation (including PowerPoint-aided talks), a poster presentation, a reading or “unveiling” of creative work, a concert or other type of performance, or a “defense” of the undergraduate thesis. Discuss with your project supervisor to identify an appropriate outlet and form for your presentation.

6. *Must I register for HON 322 for two semesters?*

Yes. Given the amount of work involved, except in unusual circumstances, you should carry out your project over two semesters in order to allow enough time to successfully complete all the necessary components of the Capstone. This will also allow you to incorporate the Capstone research into your academic load with less stress and provide more time for close mentorship by your project supervisor and the Honors College Faculty Fellow. Keep in mind that in addition to any departmental research credits, you should be registered for HON 322 for each semester you are working on the Capstone.

7. *When should I start working on the Capstone?*

Usually the project should be completed during the last two semesters of your senior year at UIC. This means that you should be thinking about the project and initiate discussion of possible topics with potential faculty mentors by the second semester of your junior year. You may also begin the Capstone project as early as your junior year and complete it prior to your last semester.

8. *Do I need to turn in a completion/progress report form even if I have not finished the project?*

Yes, for each semester you register for HON 322, you will need to submit (1) a Capstone Registration and Proposal Form at the beginning of the semester, and (2) a Completion/Progress Report at the end of the semester. You will receive a “DFR” grade if you don’t turn in the Completion/Progress Report.

9. *Can I change the project supervisor and the project after one semester?*

Unless your project supervisor decides not to continue his or her supervision or unforeseen difficulties make it imperative for you to find a different supervisor/project, it is not a good idea to make such a change. First, both the project supervisor and you have already committed to the project and put much work into it. Second, you will need to put in extra effort to ensure the new project fulfills capstone requirements. Third, your potential new project supervisor may not feel comfortable supervising your Capstone when another faculty member has already guided you through work on the project.

10. *Does my research need to be approved by IRB?*

Research involving human subjects must be approved by the IRB. This is another reason why the Capstone project will take two semesters. Check with your project supervisor and your Faculty Fellow about the IRB review. You can also visit OVCR website for more information: <http://tigger.uic.edu/depts/ovcr/research/protocolreview/irb/index.shtml>.

11. *Who should I go to when I have more questions about the Capstone project?*

Your project supervisor can provide you with guidance and support. Honors College Fellows can also be extremely helpful. Of course, you can also bring your questions and concerns to the Honors College. For more information, please consult Honors College’s website: <http://www.uic.edu/honors/learning/capstone.shtml>. You can also contact Dean Chang (huiching@uic.edu), Dean Hall (sahall@uic.edu), or Dr. Pirozhenko (epiroz2@uic.edu) with any questions you might have.